

Hero of the Storm

A blacksmith works at his forge, using his well-muscled arm to strike hearty blows on the hot bars of iron before him. His project is a great chain, the kind used to hold the anchor of a ship. The blacksmith does his work faithfully and well. Every link is made of good metal, and all are soundly welded together. The project is finished.

Months go by, and turn into years. The old blacksmith dies, and is forgotten.

A ship, setting out to sea on its voyage, is engulfed by a raging storm. Fierce winds and high waves threaten the vessel. Its survival is in doubt. The captain orders that the anchor be cast. The entire crew, and most of the passengers, know their fate depends on whether the chain -- the same one fashioned by the old blacksmith -- will hold their ship to the anchor.

All through the dark night and the howling storm, the anchor holds fast. At last, the storm abates. All aboard greet the dawn with gladness and prayers of thanksgiving to God for their deliverance.

Does this story have a hero? Was it the captain, whose knowledge of the sea and the elements led the crew in a strategic plan? Was it the crew, who battened down the hatches and cast the anchor, faithfully implementing the captain's orders? All played very important roles as they battled the storm.

The real hero, I believe, was the man who wielded a simple hammer upon an anvil with skill and good conscience -- steadily doing his work and riding out the waves of his own life to create the best he could for others, for their advantage and for their benefit. If, instead, he had taken a halfhearted approach to his work, using inferior metal, the ship and its crew and passengers likely would have been lost.

How important is the work that we do in Life Care, American Lifestyles and Life Care at Home -- today, tomorrow or even years after we have gone? Time, and God, will be the judge. This I know: There are heroes among us, unsung, yet true.

--Beecher Hunter